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half an hour brought us to a Kafir kraal, where, for six pieces of linen and some beads, I obtained permission to occupy an old hut, and considered myself fortunate in obtaining a dry and sheltered spot wherein to die. The same afternoon Mr. Breda ceased to breathe, and in the evening the long-expected help arrived. Two young Boers, relatives of one of my deceased companions, brought oxen from Origstadt, and the next morning brought one of the waggons from the Kamati River, leaving the other in charge of a Kafir chief. They committed the remains of my father-in-law to the earth and made all possible haste to Origstadt, which we reached in the beginning of May. I was then unable to walk, stand, or sit, having lived for twenty days upon sugar and water alone.

In the course of two months, by the Divine blessing upon a naturally good constitution, I was able to walk without assistance and without having undergone any regular course of medicine; but it was nearly a year before I fully recovered from my illness. My experience will deter me from ever visiting Delagoa again, and I trust that this narrative will have the effect of dissuading others.

5. *Abstract of Notes on the Limpopo.* By DR. W. WAY, M.D.

DR. WAY states the result of inquiries made at Zout Pans Berg, about the lower course of the Limpopo. This village is the emporium of a considerable commerce, and is also a kind of Alsatia for refugees from the laws of the Cape Colonies and the adjoining territories. There are many inhabitants who have means of obtaining considerable knowledge of distant localities. Dr. Way's conclusions are based upon the information given by one of these men, combined with that of two Portuguese traders from Delagoa Bay: they are to the effect that the Limpopo reaches the sea at a point midway between Delagoa Bay and Inhambane, and is there called the "Bembe." Its position corresponds with that marked Inhampura on the maps.—F. G.

6. *On Chinese Notices of their own Great Rivers.* By JOSEPH EDKINS, Esq.

Communicated by SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, &c. &c. &c.

THE Chinese have accounts in their books of the changes that have occurred in their great rivers for many ages back. They have in modern times made minute researches into the topography of ancient China to illustrate the books of the classical period. The sites of old cities and the old boundaries of kingdoms and provinces, with alterations in the course of rivers, have all been carefully investigated for the better understanding of the classics.

The alluvial plain in which Shanghae and Suchow are situated is represented in maps by native scholars as an extensive delta, through which the Yangtse-keang formerly poured its waters by three mouths to the sea. One mouth was at Hangchow, the southernmost point in the plain. Another arm of the river, passing through the lake Tachu, proceeded along the Wusung-keang from Suchow to Shanghae, and entered the sea at Wusung. The third was identical with the present embouchure. The old Wusung river, that always led from Suchow to Shanghae, is now become shallow and narrow in many parts. It was formerly a river of much greater magnitude than at present.

Much of the carrying trade in boats between Suchow and Shanghae is now done by the Hwang-pu river, a stream that passes the city of Shanghae from the south, and immediately afterwards enters the Wusung river. Before

bending north to Shanghai the Hwang-pu river has an easterly course, and it assists in carrying the superfluous waters of the Taehu, with which it is connected by other streams and by lakes, to the sea. Changes in the water channels in this delta have been studied by native scholars, not only for the illustration of ancient topography, but for the assistance of government officers in regulating the system of embankments and canals, and generally in comprehending the physical features of the country. I have no opportunity, while in England, of referring to such native works as would mark out the course taken by the two old branches of the Yang-tse-keang before reaching the Taehu and Hangchow. There is a strong stone breakwater and embankment constructed along the north coast of the Hangchow Bay nearly to Shanghai to keep out the sea. No streams are allowed to enter the ocean through this embankment, because a salt-water tide would force its way up the channels by which they flowed, to the injury of the rich plain behind. All the waters of this district enter the sea ultimately by the Yang-tse-keang, whose vast volume of water causes a fresh-water tide to flow into all its tributaries, even those nearest the sea. If the communication between the Hangchow Bay and the Yang-tse-keang had been allowed to remain, the agriculture of that rich district would have been affected by the intrusion of sea water. To prevent this was the object of the system of embankments, which helped to bring the river and the country adjoining it to their present state.

The channel of the Yellow River, or Hwang-ho, which has been recently left dry, was formerly the bed of another river, the Hwei, flowing by Fung-yang-fu into the sea, between the Yang tse and the Hwang-ho. This latter river has always been accustomed to change its embouchure once in two or three centuries. In recently seeking a path to the sea in a more northerly latitude, it has been making an effort to return to its original course. I have seen, in a critical work on the Yu-kung, five or six maps representing the path pursued by the river at as many epochs from the Han dynasty, coeval with the Christian era, till the present time. Sometimes it reached the sea to the north of Shantung promontory, at other times to the south of it. The section of the Shoo-king (Book of History) called Yu-kung consists of a geographical description of China in the time of the Emperor Yu. It details what was done by that famous ruler, about two thousand years before Christ, in restoring the country to a condition fit for agriculture after a local deluge. In this remarkable fragment the names are extremely antique, and there is room for much research in discovering the localities of ancient towns and the former courses of the rivers. Many works have been published on this subject; for example, the one just referred to.

The most remarkable feature in the Shoo-king is the scientific character of its commencing chapters. It is a book made up of fragments written in different periods. Its principal divisions are the respective histories of the five dynasties, Tang, Yu, Hea, Shang, and Chow. The most important portions for science are that of Tang, containing the early Chinese astronomy, and the commencement of the history of the Hea dynasty, viz. Yu-kung, the very valuable fragment on Chinese geography just referred to.

NOTE.—Mr. Edkins, in his paper on the ancient courses of the great rivers of China, has touched upon a point of great importance to physical geography.

There is probably no other part of the world where records of so early a date and such good authority are to be obtained with reference to the detritus of large rivers as in the annals of the Chinese empire. It is therefore to be hoped that Mr. Edkins will pursue his inquiries on his return to China, and forward to the Society the result of his labours upon so important a subject.—R. C.
